

# A HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY

THE STORY OF ITS RELATIONS WITH SATAN AND THE POPES

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## FOREWORD

America, which so strongly and so justly disapproves of the Iron Curtain in Europe, might be called the classic land of Iron Curtains. More than 20,000,000 of its adult citizens huddle together in more or less secret societies, and oaths of secrecy are so common that you might imagine that the scurvy agents of George III were still lurking in the shadows. It is fascinating to guess what these millions of grown men are doing behind their curtains.

We may be sure that the Knights of Columbus drink their holy water in an atmosphere of austerity and that the Knights Templars do not follow the picturesque but wicked practices of the monk-Knights whose name they have piously adopted, while the very name of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine or the Veiled Prophets of the Enchanted Realm freezes curiosity on the profane lips. What the Elks and the Eagles do or what the oddities of the Odd Fellows are we cannot imagine, but we picture to ourselves the Moose roaring in their Lodges, the graceful Elks disporting themselves in the sylvan glades, the Modern Indians play-

fully chasing each other with blunt tomahawks . . .

Seeing the total consumption of rye, bourbon, and beer in America we are disposed to think that there is a healthy element of the cult of Bacchus in the veiled ceremonies of all of them; just as there was in the gatherings of the jovial monks of the Middle Ages who were their predecessors. But the chief mystery of these kindly and convivial societies is why the largest of them, the Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons and Concordant Orders, which professes to combine the wisdom of the world from the beginning of time with the most perfect blend of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, is condemned by the most powerful church in America with a virulence that makes our blood run cold. Since none of our learned encyclopedias illumines or even draws attention to this mystery, and even Masonic writers do not tell the full truth about it, I propose here, in accordance with my familiar and malicious practice of telling truths which more august authorities feel ought to be suppressed, to throw a little light on the matter.

## I. THE SEARCH FOR A FATHER

It has intrigued me that a modern American should share the idea of some Europeans that the further you can trace your pedigree back into earlier ages the more you are entitled to respect. If a man's ancestors came over on the *Mayflower* he preens himself, but if he can establish that those ancestors descend from one or other of the unmitigated ruffians and perverts who settled in England with William the Conqueror, his distinction is doubled.

A church that dates back only to the comparatively enlightened days of Erasmus and Luther is an upstart in comparison with one that reaches back to the Dark Age, while churches that were founded in the 18th or the 19th century are hardly entitled to public consideration. We seem to have equal respect for the science of our sons and the wisdom of our fathers.

This medieval vice was, naturally, worse in the Middle Ages when Freemasonry appeared, than it now is, and so the early admirers of that body sought to give it a pedigree as long as that of a piece of Chinese porcelain or a Hebrew religious rite. Hence the extraordinary mythology with which, now half-humorously, every history of Freemasonry begins. The great temple of Solomon easily caught their attention. It cost, it seems, according to a recent expert on such matters, \$35,514,212,500—notice the realism of the figure—so there must have been some remarkable masons way down in Judea 3,000 years ago. Obviously the craft was by that time fully developed.

The Tower of Babel is an earlier landmark, and as that did not come so long after the Flood we want to know why the craft was not washed out in those rainy days.

Well, Noah and his sons, it seems, carved all the secrets on two columns which stood the onrush of the waters. One was found ages afterwards by a Greek named Pythagoras (hence the learning of that philosopher) and the second by another Greek named Hermes (who was a Greek God). But, of course, Noah, in spite of his fondness for strong drink, must have recollected all the secrets himself, so you find them embodied in the Egyptian pyramids, the audacious design to build a tower in Mesopotamia, and in the immortal glories of Solomon's fabulous temple.

In fact, it all started, we are told, in the Garden of Eden where the Lord taught Adam, in the days of his innocence, all the secrets of the craft. Why they were handed down to the Egyptians in particular, in whose history we read of so many "mysteries," is not explained, and the more skeptical of these learned historians prefer the theory that it was really Euclid (of about 300 B. C.) who was a son of Abraham (about 2000 B. C.), though the Old Testament forgot to mention him, that taught the Egyptians geometry, which is another word for Freemasonry. Moses stole the art and craft from the Egyptians and set up a lodge in the desert, with himself as Grand Master. In the fulness of time the Hebrews embodied it in the great temple of Solomon (950 B. C.) and their skill caught the eye of the King of France, Charles Marshall (Charles Martel) who invited Solomon (of 950 B. C.) to send him (in the 8th century A. D.) masons who would help him to adorn his country with beautiful churches and monasteries. (Incidentally, Charles was a half-civilized brute who sacked or burned large numbers of churches and monasteries but is not known

ever to have built one). This illustrious and benevolent monarch (of the 8th century) sent masons to help to civilize Roman Britain, and they converted St. Alban (who was martyred by the Romans in the year 304) and made him the first Grand Master of English Masonry.

If you find this remarkable chronology too dizzy, there are plenty of alternatives. There is the theory that the Phoenicians, sailing to Britain in search of tin (which is not now believed), brought the sacred wisdom with them from the East and taught it to the Druids, who were the first British Freemasons. If you are still incredulous, how about the theory that the Essenes, the most austere Jewish sect in the time of Christ, fled to Britain from persecution and brought masonry with them; or the theory that a King of Troy (before 1000 B. C.) learned it in the schools of Athens (after 400 B. C.), sent missionaries to Britain, and inspired the Gypsies who brought this supreme wisdom from the East to Europe.

I do not find that anybody has yet suggested that these marvelous early masons built the Parthenon at Athens but even recent Masonic writers have contended that we must recognize the secrets of the craft in the Greek Eleusinian Mysteries. Lessing, the most learned classical scholar and estheticist of the 18th century, scorned all these ingenious theories and suggested that it was the Crusaders who brought the treasures to England.

In his day it was still believed that the Knights of the Age of Chivalry were really interested in truth and virtue. A rival sage then said that it was the Saracens; and the distinguished antiquarian of the last century, Godfrey Higgins, pointing out that a column or pole is one of the symbols used in Masonic decoration, connected it with that indelicate symbol, the British May Pole, which is still reared in places in the month when the young man's fancy lightly turns to love, and tried to cut the whole business short by saying that Ma-

sons merely means May's Sons.

It must not be imagined that these are speculations of the ill-informed age of Thomas Aquinas and the Schoolmen or even of the little-better informed days of Luther. Who invented the legends nobody now knows, but it must have been sometime later than the 13th century—probably much later—and the 18th century was well advanced when they were collected and presented as we now know them by the Rev. J. Anderson, one of the founders of British-American Freemasonry. In fact, the leading modern historian of the fraternity, R. F. Gould, devotes nearly half his "Concise History of Freemasonry" to them and is not at all disposed to dismiss them as entirely vain.

The Masonic symbols, he says, must be ancient, as he is convinced that they (the square, compass, etc.) always had a moral meaning—do we not still talk of a "square deal"—so we may see some kind of ancient brotherhood behind them.

In the last century, in fact, when history became something better than a mush of medieval traditions and clerical fabrications, so that all the gorgeous myths had to be abandoned, Masonic writers began to vindicate this prized antiquity of their order in what was thought to be a scientific way. Most Freemasons probably do not care the toss of a crooked nickel about the signs and symbols and phraseology of their fraternity, and the minority who take them seriously puzzle us.

They recognize in them, they say, truths of the greatest value to the race. Yet they insist so severely on keeping them from the world, or behind the Iron Curtain of the oath of secrecy, that it is still difficult to know exactly what they are. It appears that one recognizes a fellow-Mason in any circumstances—strangers meeting on a ship, for instance—by some movement of the fingers or hands, like two Jesuit plotters meeting in an ale-house in the days of Elizabeth.

It was long ago claimed that the medieval masons who built the

great cathedrals carved the less solemn figures on the facades making these signs or gestures to each other. Travellers then began to report having seen the same signs in all parts of the world or in the most ancient books of other civilizations. Sir Chaloner Alabaster, for instance, a distinguished writer on China, only half a century ago insisted that he found these symbols in the earliest annuals of that country and that they prove the existence then of a mystic sect of a "Masonic form."

He is unfortunate when he says that here we find the same moral symbolism as was embodied in "the Tabernacle which Moses set up in the desert." A careful drawing, especially if it is colored, of the structure which is described in the Old Testament will suggest a symbolism that will interest the policeman more than the moralist. However, in an apparently sympathetic paragraph on this theory, in the article on Freemasonry in the latest edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, it is suggested that these more or less identical signs and symbols in all parts of the world do point to an ancient cult which looks rather like the last phase of the cult of the dying fertility-god.

I have shown elsewhere that, on the contrary, the cult of the Mother Earth goddess was much alive until the last few centuries of the old era, when ethical religion, or the cult of the Sky Father God, vanquished it; in theory, that is to say, for history does not suggest that in practice it ever did die. However, there you have, and under recent and respectable auspices, another theory of the origin of Freemasonry; and if you are a Mason and feel that there is something not quite respectable about it, you may, as some do, consider that this first religion of the human race, as is testified by its universal diffusion, was really the first pure revelation of himself by God to man. If you are not a Mason you may conclude that this discovery of Masonic symbols in ancient China and among primitive peoples of Africa and Australia is just one

more proof of the richness of the mystic imagination.

Finally, there is a theory that seems to me to come much nearer to the truth than all these speculations about Adam and Moses, Nebuchadnezzar and Charles Martel, and so on. It is based upon three unquestionable facts: the existence of "colleges" or trade unions of the workers in the ancient Roman Empire, the existence of rather obscure workers in stone known in the chronicles as "the Comacine Masters" (or masons living round Lake Como in North Italy) during some centuries after the fall of Rome, and the Gilds of the Middle Ages. The theory is that the earliest Freemasons in Europe were the Masons Gild in the general service of medieval Gilds, the successors, through the Comacine builders, of the old Roman college (or union) of masons.

Where I have had, in earlier historical works, to say something about the Gilds, I suggested, without at that time being aware of the Masonic speculations, that the Gilds were the revival or revivification of the Roman colleges, and I mentioned the Comacine builders as a possible, though not convincing, connecting link.

It is, of course, fully acknowledged today that the workers of the Greek-Roman civilization were organized in these trade unions. In fact, they were described at length in dictionaries of classical antiquities of the last century, but clerical interest confined knowledge of them to experts, as the pre-Christian status of the workers had to be represented as unjust or miserable.

In every city the workers of each trade had their local branches and club-rooms. They had periodical suppers, funds for assisting the sick or helping to pay for a funeral, and welcoming fellow-workers of their own craft from distant cities.

As the entire economic system was ruined after the fall of the Empire it is natural to assume that this trade-union system disappeared, and when "unions or

Gilds appeared in the Middle Ages it was easy for the Church to take the credit of having created them.

I pointed out that, on the contrary, the Gilds (called by that name even in the Latin documents) appeared in the Dark Ages (8th century) and instead of fostering them, the Church denounced them as "pagan," fought them for 100 years, and only took them over and Christianized them when it could not surpass them. The clerical tradition was so strong that even experts on the Gilds like Gross suppress the evidence—which is plain in the Capitularies of Charlemagne and other documents—and misrepresent the facts. I pointed out also a fact which all historians of the Gilds miss; that in the contemporary descriptions of the procession that met Charlemagne at Rome in the year 800 it is mentioned that "schools" of the Roman workers marched under their own banners; which clearly means some sort of survival or revival of the old colleges.

The masons or, as we now say, builders were one of the most important corporations of the Greek-Roman world, but in the appalling poverty and demoralization that followed its collapse one would imagine that the builders would be the first to suffer.

The modern theory is, as I said, that the references at the time to "Comacine masters" means that the Roman builders took refuge in the region of the Italian lakes. The interval between the fall of the Empire and the first appearance of the Gilds in the 8th century is so long (three centuries) that I was rather skeptical about this theory and did not work it out. But if you consider historical facts which the authors of the theory do not seem to have known, it is plausible enough.

After the collapse the city of Rome certainly did no serious building for ages, but in North-central Italy there were two excellent little civilizations in the

three centuries: the Ostrogothic in the 6th century, which raised buildings that still survive at Ravenna, and the Lombard, which was even more advanced in art, in the 7th and 8th.

It is easy to assume that the workers of the Roman builders' union were attracted to the Kingdom of Theodoric, retired to the Lake district when the Franks destroyed that Kingdom, returned to the cities—Como is only 50 miles from Milan, the second city of ancient Italy—when the Lombards restored the arts, and remained there in the troubled times that followed the destruction of the Lombard civilization for the Pope by Charlemagne.

He may even have taken a body of the builders to his own Kingdom, where, as I said, the Gilds attracted the notice of church and state just at this time. Little more than a century later the marriage of a German prince to a Greek princess led to a new cultivation of art in Germany, and whatever builders there still were in North Italy would be attracted. Here the first European cathedrals arose, and it is significant that the Romanesque style in which they were built was a modification, not of the Byzantine style of the Greek artists, but of the classic Roman style.

I am not here developing a theory, which would be out of all proportion in this essay on Freemasonry generally, but stating a chain of historical facts which are certainly suggestive. An indisputable conclusion from them is that there was a Gild of Masons in Germany and North Italy when several cathedrals and a large number of churches were first built there in the 11th century. But were they, or why were they called "free masons"? And had they, or how did they come to have, the religious character and the air of secrecy which have drawn such a rich screen of myths round their early development?

## 2. THE HOLY BEGINNINGS OF THE CRAFT

The one definitely known fact about the early history of Free-masonry is that the Grand Lodge which became the parent, apart from the lodges of the Scottish rite, of nearly all other branches and provided their Constitution was established in London in the year 1717. What happened in the seven centuries between the building of the first cathedral and that date is a problem full of obscurities. These, although they naturally enkindle a passionate interest in Masonic writers, do not greatly concern us here, but a short consideration of them must be included. Unpublished documents in archives and record-offices have been diligently studied and, after reading the numerous quotations in Gould and other writers, I will simplify the issue as far as possible.

The most reliable authority, as far as it goes, on account of its strict impartiality and high standard of scholarship, is the Oxford Dictionary of the English language. This model work, in 30 or 40 folio volumes, supports the definitions of words that it gives by quoting the earliest uses of a word in English literature. It confesses that it is impossible to say definitely how the adjective "free" came to be applied to masons, because from the start the word is curiously ambiguous. If you take it in its ordinary sense, as one not held by restrictions, there is very little positive evidence to support it. Some suggest that the masons, being so important a trade in that great age of building, were relieved of the ordinary legal restrictions on the Gilds; and one quotation supports this. Others say that as they had to move from one big job to another in a distant city they were made free to do so, but this surely applies to all workers, though not apprentices, after the abolition of serfdom.

On the other hand the documents quite generally distinguish between "free masons" and "rough masons" on the ground that the former worked in "free stone"; that is to say, the finest grained varieties of sand or lime-stone, which cut more freely. The workers in this were the more skilful. An important civic document of the year 1376, kept in the Guildhall of the city of London, lists representatives of the Gilds in the city Council.

The writer first says that the Council includes "four free masons and two masons," then crosses this out and says "six masons." Twenty years later a charter of Richard II grants the Archbishop of Canterbury permission to have "24 masons called free and 24 called rough." A difficulty arises when we find a third group called "cowans" at one date and the free masons refusing to work with them; in one text because, they say, these cowans are "unfree." But since in nine cases out of 10 of these references in the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries we have a plain distinction between "free masons" and "rough masons," it seems to me that we have here the origin of the name. It explains why the word "free" has come down attached to the craft of the masons alone.

The Gild of the masons or workers in, as one document says, "the honest craft of good masonry" would, like all other Gilds, take on a religious character in the 10th century. Long before cathedral building began there were large and rich abbeys and massive stone castles to be built, and the masons would travel from one job to another. As no worker could read in those days there was nothing corresponding to the modern union-card, so it is possible that they would have secret signs or gestures for mutual recognition and for excluding tramps or "rough"

masons. There would, in any case, doubtless be secrets of the craft to guard, as there were later secrets of making stained glass. When they were engaged on a large enterprise quarters or sheds were built for them and these are described as "lodges" in the contemporary documents.

With the rise of the Romanesque cathedrals in Germany in the 11th century, the great Gothic cathedrals in the 12th century, and the erection of civic halls, abbeys, palaces, etc., as wealth increased, the Gild of Free Masons would become rich and powerful, and it would share with other Gilds the three degrees which are still generally recognized in Masonry: apprentices, journeymen (now Fellow Craftsmen), then the great body of the workers), and Master Masons.

Masonic writers now deny that monks were the architects and chief builders of the cathedrals, and many modern writers on art agree with them that the conventional idea of the piety of the age expressing itself in these soaring structures is one of the expiring Catholic myths. The Master Masons were, they contend, the architects; and there is, in fact, no special mention of architects in medieval literature.

We ought not to press their importance too far, as crafts like that of the carpenter would also be of great importance in the new building, and we must remember that the houses of the richer burghers as well as of the workers were of wood or were, as was said, half-timbered. Yet the masons must have figured prominently in the procession of the Gilds on holy days, and their lodges must have been exceptionally comfortable and their suppers rich, and possibly they began to have civic influence. I have quoted the official document of the city of London in 1376 telling us that there were six masons in the Council. Trade halls (Fisher-mongers Hall, etc) which survive in London today are handsome structures, richly decorated, unlike the prosy structures in which the

modern Unions have their headquarters.

This led gradually to a revolution in the character of the Free-masons. We have evidence that several Gilds began in the 14th century to admit "honorary members" and it is clear that the masons went far beyond others in this respect.

At first, we may assume, these "Accepted Masons" were prominent members of other Gilds or burghers who were admitted to share its gaieties, benefits, and, on an oath of secrecy, its religious rites and supposed ancient lore. It was an age of boisterous sensuality and joviality in spite of the constant ravages of disease and war, and a rich Gild could offer attractions that were much superior to those that a modern Trade Union can offer. But it was the beginning of a development that carried on this particular Gild when all the others were destroyed and converted into a body of middle-class and wealthy men, eager to decorate nobles and princes with the humble name of Masons and incongruously retaining the aprons and other paraphernalia of "the honest craft of masonry" in a different world.

We shall see the "speculatives," as the newcomers were called, gradually take over from the "operatives" and use the secrecy of the lodges in some countries for conspiracy against the medieval church and state, while in Britain and America they unite a profession of ardent religious faith with a drowsy political philosophy of conservatism from the worker's point of view.

How this change proceeded from the 13th to the 15th century and the single trade-union lodge of the builders was converted into the modern type of Masonic meeting we do not know. The most informing documents are the Old Charges or the written directions for the holding of a meeting: the opening prayer, the rite of initiation and the rules or constitution. But the oldest of these that has been

brought to light is the manual of the Kilwinning (Scotland) lodge of the year 1599. By that time the real workers Gilds were almost extinct, and the Reformation had profoundly modified the religious structure of the craft. It was still essentially Christian in form, and it seems already to have been furnished by its new "speculative" adherents with its weird mythological history. There seems to have been a considerable spread of the new Freemasonry in England and Scotland.

Phineas Ashmole, one of the more learned men of his time, the original donor of the famous Ashmolean Museum at Oxford University, describes how in 1646 he was initiated as an Accepted Mason in a small town in the north of England. It is said that later in the century the great architect, Sir Christopher Wren, was admitted. It is not at all clear why distinguished scholars or artists like these sought admission. They must have known that the pretence of secret and ancient wisdom was, as Charles Bradlaugh, atheistic Mason, has said of it, "the elaborate lock to an empty iron chest." We will assume that they had the entirely respectable motive of a love of conviviality.

The collapse of the Gilds (or organized bodies of workers), which had by the end of the 15th century proved detrimental both to trade and to the workers themselves—it is not true that Protestantism destroyed them—had revolutionized the character of Freemasonry. It was now in the 14th and 15th centuries, an organization for convivial and mutual-aid purposes, with an air of secrecy and a dash of mysticism to season it, for gentry and middle-class folk with aristocrats as decorative leaders. It may have suffered from the intense hunt for spies and traitors in the religious quarrels of the 16th century, and it encountered new molding influences in the 17th. In 1642, the English Civil War opened, and as it was largely a rebellion of the middle class against a tyrannical monarch one wonders what was its effect on Masonry.

In any case, the end of the war (1648) was followed by the 12-year rule of the Puritans, and this would certainly check it. We may assume that it throve again under the gay Charles II, but it seems to have drooped once more in the early part of the 18th century, when it experienced its second revolution. In 1717 it was reorganized and established on its modern basis as a combination of a cult of the Grand Architect of the Universe with the old policy of mutual help and conviviality and the familiar air of secrecy.

Masonic writers discuss the history of their fraternity without any regard to the general history of the periods in which it experienced its successive transformations, but it does not seem fanciful to relate this complete change of the old craft-gild into a general benevolent society to the notable changes of thought at this period.

Science, under the influence of Lord Bacon and the more recent influence of Newton, was making considerable progress, and, as Germany had not quite recovered from the Thirty Years War and France had been demoralized by the reign of Louis XIV, England had taken the lead. There had, apart from this, been a remarkable growth of Deism in England in the last years of the 17th and early years of the 18th century. Pope's deistic poetry is a monument of the time, and not only were there other brilliant men of letters (Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Horace, Walpole, etc.) in the school but their ideas spread widely amongst the nobility and gentry.

Queen Caroline was an unconcealed Deist who refused to take oaths of office or receive even the archbishop when she was dying. The greatest statesman of the time, Walpole, was at least a Deist, probably a deeper skeptic, and some of the leading figures in the court, like Lord Hervey, were Deists.

The great astronomer Halley (god-father of the famous comet) openly professed Deism. John Locke, who died in 1704, left disciples like Anthony Collins in the country gentry who wrote out-

spoken criticisms of the church. A French writer says that Toland formed a society called Pantheisticon to which the leading Deists, Bolingbroke, Collins, Tindale, Wollaston and Hume belonged, and that this was the model of the new Masonry. But he seems to have taken an imaginary society sketched by Toland to have been a reality.

The new characteristic phrase of the Masons after 1717, "the Grand Architect of the Universe," is essentially a Deistic expression, and it is significant that one of the two founders of the reorganized fraternity was a distinguished scientific man of the time. The two men who in 1717 gathered together the members of a few scattered lodges in London were the Rev. J. Anderson, a Presbyterian minister, and J. T. Desaguliers, son of a French Huguenot refugee. This man was a friend of Sir Isaac Newton, a Fellow of the Royal Society, and holder of the much-coveted scientific distinction, the Copley Medal. We have clear ground to believe that this man was behind Anderson when he radically altered the constitution of the fraternity.

Anderson appears to have been rather a simple-minded man. He repeated all the old nonsense about the antiquity of the fraternity and gave as its motto the opening words of the gospel of John, though in Greek, which few would understand. But instead of the old oath to be "loyal to God and the Holy Church," he adopted the formula: "the Grand Architect of the Universe," which might have been taken from Bolingbroke or from Pope's "Essay on Man." At one point even the pious Gould calls it Deistic.

This did not at once appear. The first thing was to form the society. Four groups of Masons of the old type met in London in well known taverns—the Goose and Gridiron, the Crown, the Bunch of Grapes, and the Apple Tree.

They were summoned to a meeting in the Apple Tree Tavern on July 24th, 1717, and agreed to amalgamate in a Grand Lodge under a Grand Master with two degrees of

membership, the Apprentice and the Fellow Craftsman or Master.

Anderson was directed to prepare a new charter, and Desaguliers, who was the third Grand Master, assisted him. When this new Constitution of the Free Masons was presented in the assembly in 1723 there was such uproar that the Grand Master, the Duke of Wharton, walked out of the room in disgust. The name of Desaguliers had been proposed for Deputy Grand Master, and it was fiercely opposed. One member was later expelled from the fraternity for serious slander of the learned Huguenot.

There were several grounds for disagreement. One almost chronic dispute of the Masons was about the number of the "degrees" but the enthusiasm with which this question is still discussed—in literature—is hardly intelligible to us outsiders. The main quarrel was the change from a definitely Christian to a Deistic complexion.

Anderson, who later repented, and Desaguliers, who did not, blandly explained that the new religion was to extend its great moral benefits to the whole of humanity, so that it must be content with the truths which were common to all religions, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

This did not conciliate opponents. Not only did the chief Masonic Lodge in the north, at York, set itself up schismatically as the Grand Lodge of all England and plague the Londoners for the next 20 years, but the Duke of Wharton, the Grand Master, led off a body of stalwarts to form the Order of the Gormozons. The secret soon oozed out and London, which in those days snapped up the least excuse for gaiety and showers of cartoons, joined cheerfully in the fray. Bogus descriptions of initiations in the dark with drawn swords, ladders, etc., circulated and the cartoonists had a great time. The satirical painter Hogarth derided both sides in a famous picture. The Rev. Anderson and the learned Desaguliers were described as "deflowering a Venerable Old Gentlewoman" (the Old Charges or ritual).

Withal the fraternity made fair progress. In 1729 there were 42 lodges in London and 11 in the provinces, and in 1730 the Duke of Norfolk, head of the English nobility and a Catholic, became Grand Master. In 1731 the Order got its first royal member, the Duke of Lorraine, and in 1737 the Prince of Wales was elected Grand Master.

The Scottish Masons, who were largely in exile in France where they supported "Bonny Prince Charlie," Pretender to the throne of England, tried in vain to prove that theirs was the real old firm. When the Grand Master of the Templars had been executed in the 14th century, they said, his successor had fled to Scotland and founded true Masonry there. The religious quarrel also continued, and in 1738 Anderson produced a revised Constitution in which he brought them back to orthodoxy.

Desaguliers and the Deists—Gould himself here uses the word—now split off and London again enjoyed the spectacle and the fraternity lost ground. "The Masons are in so low repute in England" Horace Walpole wrote in 1743, "that one has scarcely heard of the proceedings (the ban on the Order) at Vienna. . . . As great as our follies are, we grow tired of them." And, to finish with this chapter of their history, there was a "great schism" in 1751, when the Ancients, or those who stood firm in the Constitution of 1717, anathematized the Moderns, who set up a rival Grand Lodge; and London again resounded with gaiety.

It is clear that by this time, when radical clubs and secret political societies were spreading in England, religion was not the only ground of quarrel. But the French revolution in 1789 led to a fierce campaign against radicalism and plots, and Freemasonry was only saved by its noble patrons.

They languidly maintained their

rival Grand Lodges throughout the Napoleonic wars, and in 1813 they reunited. Two years later they found their final formula in regard to religion: "Let a man's religion or mode of worship be what it may he is not excluded from the Order, provided he believes in the glorious architect of heaven and earth and practices the sacred duties of morality."

One writer says that the real motto now adopted as regards religion and politics I may translate: "Hear everything, see everything—and keep your mouth shut." It seems better than the familiar legend of the three monkeys: "Hear nothing, see nothing, say nothing." In point of fact, although English Masonry has ever since been a shrine of conservatism and orthodoxy, the religious and moral pretension is not taken seriously by the majority.

Charles Bradlaugh, the atheistic orator, was a Mason. British Masons have indignantly denied this, but his daughter gives full proof of it in her life of her father (1.203-6). He was already a Mason when the radical refugees from Europe founded a lodge in London in 1850, in which he was active. He quit the English fraternity when it proposed to make the Prince of Wales Grand Master; and he must have smiled when the prince later insisted in his speech that the clause about belief in God must be retained in the interest of morality.

If any man does not know what the morals of the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) were, let him read—in the French original—Zola's "Nana" in which "the Prince of Scotland" is Edward. Of Bradlaugh's experiences with American Masons I will speak later; and how and why British and American Masonry came to damn the atheistic Masonry of the French Grand Orient I will now proceed to tell.

### 3. IT SINKS INTO ATHEISM AND CONSPIRACY

A French writer on Freemasonry in his own country has said that it was Deistic in the 18th century, Pantheistic in the first half of the 19th century, and Atheistic in the second half. In the light of what we have seen we may say that it had been Polytheistic in Ancient Rome, where it had its first form as the masons' or builders' trade union, Catholic in the Middle Ages, and Protestant in the 17th century.

All of which means that religion was just a mantle that it wore instead of an essential part of its nature: a garment which it naturally changed with every alteration of the prevailing religious fashion, which in this it resembles the race itself. Religion was never more than a garment that men wore because at the time when they became fully conscious and civilized they found themselves wearing some such garment and the priests persuaded them in every age until ours that it would be as uncivilized to return to spiritual nudity as it would be to discard all material clothes even in the warmest latitudes or seasons.

But there is a deeper meaning in the official decision of the French Masons to discard all religion about 70 years ago and the unofficial abandonment of it by the Masons of several other countries.

If Masons were sincerely to look out on life under the luminous sign of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, which they solemnly set up in 1717, they could not remain insensible of the ancient lies that still ruled the state and the profound injustices that degraded it.

Contrary to the popular belief, the French are a particularly logical and realistic people, and it was natural that French Masons should

be the first to develop and proclaim the corollaries of their principles.

The bitterest enemies of the fraternity, the Pope and Catholic writers generally, are insistent that the revolutionary slogan, "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" and the Declaration of the Rights of Man are just the expansion of the second principle of Masonry.

Nowdays they do not remind us that that principle is the Brotherhood of Men, as disdain of it would hardly be consistent with their claim that the Church inspired that principle, but quite clearly this was a starting point of the thinkers and workers who brought on the French Revolution. They decided that the destruction of political despotism and the establishment of democracy were essential for the introduction of that social justice which Europe had been denied for 14 centuries. Then, when they saw how fiercely the Popes and their Church allied themselves with the bloody reaction of the 19th century, they, in the same logical and realistic spirit, decided to attack religions as well as political corruption. The superior American Free-mason, with his supercilious talk about these French "extremists," is completely ignorant of the part that religion played in the tragic history of Europe in the 19th century.

Masonic Lodges were first set up in France, when the Masons' Gild had perished, between 1720 and 1725. They were established by Jacobite refugees from England. James (Jacobus) II, younger brother and successor of Charles II, "a cruel, revengeful, deceitful despot" (as even Floetz's Dictionary of Dates calls him) was a Catholic and in league with the French and the Vatican.

The English people could not tolerate him for more than three years, and he fled to France to escape the ignominious fate of his father. The nobles, largely Catholic, who fled with him were the "Jacobites" and were welcomed by Louis XV. One of them, the young Earl of Derwentwater, a close friend of Bonnie Prince Charlie, son of James and Pretender to the throne of England, was a London noble and a Mason.

You remember that it was in 1717 that the Grand Lodge was established in London. Derwentwater set up a lodge in Paris in 1725. For some years the French lodges were open only to nobles, chiefly English, but in the 30's they began to admit the (rich) French bourgeois, and the Church took alarm at the secrecy of their proceedings. The cardinal induced the King to exclude from his court any noble who joined a Lodge. This advertised the obscure lodges and they multiplied.

Pope Clement XII then, in 1738, made the first Papal attack (to which we will return) on the craft, but the Paris Parliament refused to register it, and it was therefore invalid in France.

Adventurers and crooks set up other societies in imitation. One admitted women, but in this "Order of Fidelity," says the French Encyclopedia, "the moral purity of the ladies was not conspicuous." Sexual freedom was, of course, as great as ever in France, and meetings in dark sealed rooms were appreciated.

The Scots set up lodges with their rite and tried to get the support of the whole body for Prince Charlie, and there was a very lively time. One lodge took up the idea that it was the Knights Templars who had founded the order, and they made it their aim to get revenge on royalty and the church for the martyrdom of the Grand Master of the Templars—on a fairly-proved charge of organized sodomy. The Paris lodge got Prince Louis de Bourbon as Grand Master and founded the Grand Lodge of France or struck the word English out of the title. The higher officials

called themselves Knights of the Orient; which is how the word Orient came to be used by French Masons; especially when, in 1766, their democrats under the Duke of Chartres, later the giddy, unscrupulous, and ambitious Duke of Orleans, drew off from the main body. One colorful branch, the Sublime Elect of Truth, was established by a single-minded mystic and the arch-crook of the age Cagliostro.

But we are not here interested in these details of the history of French Masonry. In 1772 the Grand Orient had 132 lodges, and in these, says the French Encyclopedia, "were all the young nobles who followed the humanist philosophy of the 18th century."

By 1789 there were 689 lodges, and, according to Catholic writers, the Revolution that broke out in that year was plotted in detail in these lodges. D'Estampes and Jannet, for instance, the chief Catholic writers on this phase, give a long list of the names of Masons of the time, and nearly every man who figures in the history of the Revolution is named in the list. But writers who solemnly insist on such reckless lies as that the revolutionaries "worshipped a prostitute in the altar of Notre Dame" do not invite belief.

As I have repeatedly shown that the French Revolution was a splendid, beneficent, and comparatively bloodless event, ruined four years later by the pious Deist (or Unitarian) Robespierre, I should be happy to seize this rare opportunity to agree with Catholic writers, but positive evidence is scanty.

Voltaire and most of the Encyclopedists (Diderot, Grimm, Helvetius, Holbach, etc.) certainly were Masons. Rousseau, as far as I can ascertain, was not. Such revolutionary leaders as Mirabeau, Sieyes, and Condorcet (not Tallyrand) were Masons.

We may take it for granted that at least the majority of the leaders, who were nearly all Deists or Atheists, were. But it is a mistake to say that Masonry inspired the Revolution. It was prepared and carried

by men who, already fired with a zeal for social and political reform and hostility to the Church by the great humanitarian writers of the time, found the secret meetings of the lodges an excellent machinery for their work.

The truth is that the revolutionaries detested Masonry and nearly destroyed it in France. French historians say that this was mainly because so many aristocrats were Masons, which seems to me feeble; and it is not easy to understand how, if nearly every leading revolutionary was a Mason, nearly every lodge closed down by 1793.

It seems clear that the connection with Masonry has been greatly exaggerated; that the men of revolutionary ideals had merely sheltered behind the Masonic curtain for some decades, and it was no longer necessary to do so. In the calmer days of 1795 the lodges began to re-open.

It is disputed if Napoleon himself ever became a Mason, but it had many members amongst his relatives and intimates. Joseph Bonaparte became Grand Master. The Empress Josephine and the chief ladies of her court joined one of the societies of women affiliated to the fraternity. Most of Napoleon's great generals and ministers—Murat, Massena, Kellerman, Cambaceres—were Masons.

In short, under Napoleon mellowed Masonry had something like a golden age. They smiled at its secrecy and were little interested in any but its convivial features. To the Fatherhood of God they paid the same lip-homage as the skeptical Napoleon himself did, and their idea of its Brotherhood of Men was the Napoleonic version of Liberty and Equality.

Innocuous as Masonry had become under the Empire, it, like everything Napoleonic, fell under the frown of the restored monarchy. In the years of fierce persecution of Liberalism and Republicanism that followed the police felt that the secrecy of the Masonic Lodge would be used by plotters, as doubtless it often was. It was therefore a diminished and more

serious fraternity that witnessed and loudly applauded the Second Revolution in 1830, and it was not long before the Masons discovered that the new royal line that was permitted to take the throne was just as Catholic and despotic as its predecessors.

Five Popes in a quarter of a century thundered against them, as we shall see, and in thus sealing the alliance of the Vatican with reaction they made inevitable that hostility of French Masonry to religion which American and British Masons profess that they cannot understand; and as the history of the 19th century is now written in rose-water they are not likely to understand it. But it was an entirely logical development.

In 1848 the French carried at a heavy blood-price, their Third Revolution and restored the Republic; and as the revolutionary wave rolled over Europe, sweeping away five thrones and kings, many thought that the millennium of the Brotherhood of Man had dawned.

In a few years the French found that they had been duped by Napoleon III, and, once more, in alliance with the Church, reaction set in and the progressives were scattered. In London they sadly met their brother refugees from Germany, Poland, Austria, Russia, Italy, Hungary, and Spain, and it is interesting that they founded a special Masonic lodge of their own, the Grand Lodge of the Philosophes (or of Brotherhood). Garibaldi, Mazzini, Louis Blanc, Ledru Rollin, and other heroes of the revolution met in its dingy club, and their writings ought to have taught English Freemasons why they were becoming less and less polite to the Grand Architect of the Universe. All of them except the dreamy Mazzini were Atheists.

In the dark days after the bloody reaction of 1849 it was impossible for continental Masons to have any respect for the churches, which ever since the fall of Napoleon had supported every tyrant in Europe and approved the martyrdom of at least a quarter of a million demo-

crats. The failure of nearly a score of revolutions since 1789 and the terrible revenge of the restored monarchs were just as clearly attributable to the clergy as to the royalists, and a stern new fight against both was to fill the years 1850 to 1870.

Natural as it may seem to Catholics to blame Freemasonry for every kind of revolt during the rest of the century, it was just as natural for the democratic middle class of Europe to use Masonry to plot the downfall of both clerical and political tyranny. For this they had to make it perfectly sincere and concentrate on the Brotherhood of Man. Skepticism was now making rapid progress in the educated middle class, and it was no longer the Deism of Voltaire. The majority of the men who met in the lodges in France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Italy and Portugal were now Atheists and they were impatient of this insincere homage to the Grand Architect of the Universe.

Writing in 1884 the French Catholics, D'Estampes and Jannet, said: "For a century most writers, for half a century the majority of teachers, and at present almost all men of influence generally have been or are Freemasons." So in 1877 the Grand Orient struck out of its Constitution the profession of belief in God and eliminated from the ritual all references to Christianity and the Bible. British and American Masons alone professed to be scandalized by the change.

A recent census of public opinion in Europe has disclosed that in Britain less than 50 percent of the people believe in a personal God, so something more than one half the English Masons who profess to do so at their initiation are insincere. They and the Americans, with their peaceful political evolution and their (at that time) tame and comparatively harmless churches could afford this lazy compromise with untruth. The Masons of France, Italy, Spain and Portugal had still too stern a fight on their hands.

The French had a last proof of this after the Fourth Revolution, in 1871. A new force, vaguely foreshadowing the fourth phase of Masonry, had appeared in the arena. The workers or Communards of Paris had threatened the economic prosperity of the bourgeois. At once the Liberals quit their hostility to the Church and restored it to power. But the menace soon disappeared, and by 1875, the Republic now being definitely assured, the French Masons coldly concentrated on the elimination of the Church from public life. No one proposed to persecute religion, but Church and State were to be forever separated, the idle and mischievous monks reduced, and education completely secularized; as was done, chiefly under the Mason Premier Combes, in the next 20 years.

Catholic writers acknowledged that at least three-fourths of the people had already quit the Church. I quoted a number of them in my "Decay of the Church of Rome" (1909). There were in 1883 only 30,000 Freemasons in France but they carried out the will of all but about 8,000,000 of the people. That is supposed to be what democracy means.

Yet the loud protests of the Vatican were heard with respect by British and American Masons. In 1884, Pope Leo XIII scattered over the world an encyclical in which he fulminated the anger of the Vatican. I will make a few comments on it in the next chapter and will notice here only the folly of his thinking that a threat to excommunicate any who joined the fraternity had any serious meaning whatever when already three-fourths of the nation laughed at his orders. The only consequence of his encyclical was an amazing development that I described at some length in my recent Halde man Julius booklet, "The History of Satanism." He opened his encyclical with a melodramatic assurance that Satan was marshalling all the forces of evil in the world to make a grand and final attack on Christianity.

The ritual and symbolism of Freemasonry sometimes provoke smiles but the suggestion that, in spite of all their exhortations to virtue and mutual benevolence, the Masons were being used by the Angro Mainyu of the ancient Persians to destroy civilization and, further, to ensure the damnation of the race was carrying the Catholic fairy tale too far. French bishops and preachers, however, took up the cry, and presently one or two crude adventures like "Leo Taxil" turned up with personal experiences of the devil in the lodges that made Catholic blood run cold.

The present scare about Communism will give you some idea of the extraordinary literature that circulated in France in the last dozen years of the 19th century. In a big batch of Catholic books I notice titles like (to translate them) "Satan, Inc.;" "The Masonic Murders"; "The City of Antichrist"; "The Synagogue of Satan"; "The Red Jesuits"; "The Devil in the 19th Century," and so on; and, while apologists in America were telling inquirers that to see the full beauty of the faith they must watch it in a Catholic country like France, the Church in that country was the laughing stock of Europe. Catholic writers, of course, kept the truth out of America, but the cream of the joke was that American Masonry, which professed to be greatly shocked by the action of the French Masons, was deeply involved by the French Catholics in their Satanic romance. Passing from absurdity to absurdity, when they found that the wilder your story the more profit you made, the expositors of Masonry—chiefly two completely unscrupulous French writers who laughed at the Church when they had made a fortune out of their roguery and retired—invented an American high priestess of the diabolical regiment with headquarters at Charleston. This "Diana Vaughan," a blend of Messalina, Lucrezia Borgia, Lilith, and Joan of Arc, the literal descendant of a British-American-Indian and a lady-devil, was as real to 8,000,000 Frenchmen at the end of

the 19th century as Buffalo Bill was; and the author of the fiction, was rewarded with a Papal decoration by that "wisest of modern Popes," Leo XIII. The other arch-adventurer "Leo Taxil" had a most cordial interview with the Holy Father. Bishops fawned on him and hailed him as the savior of civilization. Today the devil is in Russia and the myth-makers are in America.

But I will return to that point in the next chapter. It is enough to say here that the American and British Masons complacently looked on and wrapped themselves in their Deistic formula while the name of their fraternity was dragged in the gutters by the French Church and the Vatican. The story ran that in the lodges Satan or one of his lieutenants appeared in person, led the ceremonies, which often consisted of a Black Mass and other obscene performances, and egged on the Masons to destroy the all-wise, serene, and virtuous Church. As far as I can discover not a pen was raised in America even to point out that these libels refuted themselves by their own monstrous absurdity and that the real situation in France was that the Vatican and the hierarchy most blatantly displayed their own unscrupulousness or—if you feel that they really believed in this legion of devils and their antics—their complete unfitness for world-guidance. The American press continued to use its cliches about the Venerable Head of the Venerable Church, and when Leo died in 1903, still mouthing these obscenities, the obituary articles credited him with a wisdom and integrity more than that of Washington, Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt put together. Let me here again bring out one of my own cliches: such is public instruction in our time.

The result in France was the complete triumph of the Masons and the ruin of the Church. In 1909, when I made a careful estimate of the Church's losses in my "Decay of the Church of Rome," I, conscious that I was being generous, gave the Vatican 5,500,000

followers in 39,000,000 people. Sabatier, one of the leading French religious writers, told me that the total was really not more than 3,000,000. Then came the First World War and an accession of nearly 2,000,000 Catholics (in Alsace-Lorraine) to the population of France. The desire to pacify the two provinces, which never wanted to return to France, has profoundly modified the policy of the governing class and that of the French Masons. In the war Marshal Joffre had been a Mason, Foch a Catholic, Clemenceau and Poincaré Atheists and Masons. But the Church had now a formidable hold on them all and pressed it. Moreover there now appeared the new force which was to affect world-Masonry: the Communist menace. Masonry is essentially bourgeois: Communism essentially anti-bourgeois. Banks are more sacred than churches, and every ally, even the Pope and the Grand Architect, was welcome in the fight. So French Masonry has risen again, or sunk, to the level of British and American Masonry. One of the great constructive French Masons of the old fighting group was F. Buisson. In 1924, when I met him in Paris and reminded him of his creation of France's great system of secular schools, he muttered: "I don't think I would do it today." Statesmen who were notorious Atheists fawned on the Pope's Nuncio and attended mass in honor of Joan of Arc. In the post-war years the middle-class Masons, still Atheists, rallied to the Pope's thinly-disguised M.R.P. The recent Senatorial elections mean that, on papal suggestion, they change from it to naked, blatant De Gaulleism.

In an essay like this it is impossible to follow the development of Masonry in all the leading countries of Europe but a short account of it in Spain will show that it was much the same in all Latin countries as in France. Spanish Masons claim evidence of the existence of the craft in their country in the 16th century but the story really begins after the establishment of the Grand Lodge in London in 1717.

In 1726 English officers and merchants opened a lodge in Gibraltar; in 1727 one in Madrid.

In the course of the century French Deism spread considerably in Spain—one of Voltaire's works sold 300,000 copies in a Spanish translation—and by 1748 there were 800 Masons in Spain. Those who do not know Spanish history, will wonder that it struggled to birth at all in the classic land of the Holy Inquisition, but the great ministers Count d'Aranda, probably the finest statesman modern Spain ever produced, was a Deist and a close personal friend of Voltaire. He founded and became Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Spain in 1760. In 1780 it became the Spanish Grand Orient, in close cooperation with the French; and the colorful charlatan Cagliostro founded a number of lodges of his spurious brand.

The Church was paralyzed and the Inquisition suppressed by the French, and Napoleon's brother pressed the cause of Masonry, so that early in the century there were 420 lodges in the country. In the next 20 years they rose and fell with the phases of that bloody and tragic history of Spain which I describe elsewhere. In the reign of Ferdinand VII alone, although he was twice deposed and twice perjured his way back, more than 50,000 democrats were done to death; and we may be sure that the number included all the Freemasons. But Liberalism gained under his successor, and by 1883 there were three rival Grand Orients in Spain.

Persecution was renewed under Alfonso XIII—corrupt as he was, like every other Spanish Bourbon—and there were many judicial murders and horrible tortures in the jails. The Liberals continued to fight, and in 1910 there were 262 lodges; and nearly all that was brilliant in Spanish letters of the academic world was at least in sympathy with them.

To prevent an exposure of his evil conduct Alfonso XIII set up a military dictator, but the people in 1932 won a bloodless victory at

the polls and set up a secular Republic. But, as in France, the Socialist growth alarmed the comfortable middle class and they deserted the Socialist allies with whom they had won the Republic and prepared the way for Franco. Their Masonry has perished under the vile regime of Church and army, though most of them share the high prosperity of the upper-middle class, the aristocracy, and the clergy, while the Spanish people who carried six revolutions in a hundred years in the name of Freedom and Democracy and lost nearly 100,000 martyrs are now suffered by the French, British, and American champions of Freedom and Democracy to languish and suffer under the most sordid tyranny in Europe.

Much the same has been the fortune of Masonry in Portugal. The English founded a Grand Lodge in Lisbon in 1735. Later in the century the great statesman Pombal, a Voltairean, gave the fraternity the same opportunity as D'Aranda had given it in Spain, and the Napoleonic armies had further favored it. The royalist-clerical reaction was more horrible than it was in Spain, but it was shorter, and in the latter part of the century Freemasonry flourished. As in France it was mainly atheistic, and its leaders, like Maghalaes Lima, worked intimately with the like-minded Masons of France and Italy. It was they who organized the republican movement at the beginning of the present century and carried the revolution of 1910. By that time I was intimate with some of the fighting Spanish Masons and was aware of the plans of the republican organization long before they were carried out. But here again the economic issue made a breach between the bourgeois Masons and the workers, without whom they are always powerless, and the way was prepared for the crushing clerical aristocratic dictatorship which is still throned on the poverty and misery of the people.

It was the same in all the so-called Latin countries. The bitter

denunciation of Masonry by every Pope of the 19th century reminds me that Masons were, until recent times, deadly enemies of the Vatican and had an important share in bringing about both the Revolution of 1848, and the war by which the Piedmontese put an end to the Kingdom of the Pope and that of Naples, and the final unification of Italy.

In the middle of the 18th century, when the genial spirit of Voltaire softened the rigidity of the old regime, the English had planted Masonry in Naples, which had then a fine Deistic minister. The French fostered it when they set up a Republic at the end of the century, but the royalist-Catholic reaction after Waterloo was even more savage than in Spain and Portugal. During a half century of struggle in the Kingdom of Naples (the kings of which were as brutal and corrupt as those of Spain and Portugal) about a quarter of a million democratic men and women, it is said by native historians, were put to death.

The South Italians, whom so many despise, made the longest and sternest fight of all in the great war for freedom. In the Pope's Kingdom, Central Italy, the clerical regime was almost as barbaric; and the Austrians who ruled North Italy were merely more refined in their cruelties. The leading emancipators (Garibaldi, Mazzini, etc.) were, as I said Masons and the fraternity had a fine part in setting up the Kingdom of Italy in 1870 and keeping it solidly anti-Papal until the First World War. Then Socialism and Communism appeared and, as in France, the middle class Masons rallied to the standard of reaction; and Mussolini, whom they supported, sold them to the Papacy. In 1904 I took part in a vast gathering of 30,000 Free-thinkers at Rome and we were officially received by the Atheist-Mason mayor of Rome, Nathan, while the Popes still thundered against Masonry. Today. . . .

I need not add that it was the same in Latin America. The great liberators from the tyranny of the

Church of Spain or Portugal were atheistic Masons like Simon Bolivar. And in 1934 the sleek Liberal Masons of Brazil and Argentina, of Chile and Peru, joined with the men—the Catholics—whom their fathers had fought for 100 years and bought security for their bank-

balances by surrendering the liberties that had been won for them. There was great rejoicing in American and British Masonry. The Atheists no longer dishonored the Masonic tradition of religious and political neutrality.

#### 4. THE POPES AGAIN SAVE CIVILIZATION

Masonry has invented a hundred names for itself in the course of its many schisms and quarrels over origins, ritual, officers, and jurisdiction. That has been the fate of most organizations that professed an idealist aim. But we may surely say that for the world at large the only classification that really matters is that all lodges and Grand Lodges fall into two categories: Acquiescent and Progressive Masonry, or those centers which profess and observe, inside the lodge, complete religious and political neutrality and those which in the name of the Brotherhood of Man feel it their duty to examine which religious and political forms do promote the welfare of the race and which are opposed to it.

I will examine the point more deeply in the final chapter but, roundly, what I call Progressive Masonry, which in most countries found itself advocating Atheism and Republicanism, was virtually destroyed by the Roman Church and its royalist allies. Whether or no it would have been restored to strength in our time if the new factor of the Socialist and Communist menace had not entered the field, it is historically true that atheistic Masonry was defeated.

It is equally true that the vast majority of Masons, who are now in America and Britain, rejoice in this destruction, but one wonders how many of them understand the real features of the long conflict between the Vatican and Masonry. Today, when the history of Europe is so gravely misrepresented even in academic works it is safe to say that not one of them in tens of thousands has a true appreciation of the spirit of the conflict and the principles involved in it. My friend Dudley Wright, an esteemed British Mason and responsible writer for

the fraternity, has published an admirable work on it, "Roman Catholicism and Freemasonry" (1922), but the historical frame of his narrative is too narrow and it does not bring out the full truth. He shows that Catholics have not been alone in persecuting Masonry; Protestant Holland attacked it before the Popes did and Protestant Switzerland has some harsh proceedings to its discredit. He shows also that, especially in the 18th century, many Catholics joined the order. I have told on an earlier page how at one time a Duke of Norfolk, head of an ancient ducal family of which English Catholics are particularly proud, was Grand Master of the English Grand Lodge. The work is interesting also because it gives details of persecution in many countries, but, besides that the work may not be available in America, there is much that may profitably be added to it.

Not even a Mason, probably, now reads the text—Wright gives many pages of excellent translations—of these Papal fulminations, but some writers copy passages from Catholic writers and give the impression of earnest and learned, if misinformed, pontiffs shedding tears over a world that is reeling to destruction here and damnation hereafter. In most cases this is just Catholic moonshine.

The first Pope to denounce the fraternity was Clement XII, in 1738, 15 years after the appearance of the first Constitution. Of what happened in London Clement probably knew as little as the Grand Lama of Tibet did, but as I said, Englishmen abroad had established lodges (France, Spain and Italy), and the Pope had a vague idea that some new un-Christian international force, conspiring in sealed chambers, was spreading over

Europe and threatening thrones and churches. It was rather the cry of a scared child. It was of Clement XII that the king of Savoy said that "he would have made an excellent Pope if they hadn't made him one." He still so far lived in the Middle Ages that he rebuked the Protestant Elector of Brandenburg for taking the title of King of Prussia without his permission. So his sonorous language about Masonry is amusing. The "brigands" (Masons) are growing alarmingly. "The foxes are ravaging the Lord's vineyard." They have secret meetings and so were probably heretics. Any Catholic who joins or in any way helps them incurs major excommunication from which the Pope alone can release him. . . . The few score masons who met in small rooms in places separated by hundreds of miles from each other must have roared with laughter over their port wine and walnuts.

The French Church was at this time independent of the Vatican and did not accept papal orders unless the state endorsed them. Through the Paris Parliament the state refused to endorse this ridiculous Constitution, and it was therefore not valid even for Catholics in France, though doubtless there were many who were intimidated. At all events it is said that when the Pope declared 1750 a "Jubilee Year" and there was the usual confluence of streams of Catholics to Rome, so many French pilgrims sought papal absolution for having joined the Freemasons that Pope Benedict was compelled to renew the threat of excommunication in a new Constitution (1751).

Benedict XIV was so exceptionally learned for a Pope and so notoriously broad-minded that there has been a good deal of speculation about his reasons for repeating the nonsense of his purblind predecessor. "There is disdain of the Holy See all over the world," he once said. He tried to overcome it by an un-papal liberality. He corresponded amiably with Voltaire, who dedicated his tragedy "Mahomet" to the Pope, and with Frederick of Prussia, who asked

him for a bishopric for a Catholic canon, a favorite of his of flagrant morals and so little religious that he used to dip his crucifix into his wine to "give poor Jesus a drink." The only cardinal—the Pope was more respected in Protestant countries than in Rome—who was really friendly with him was a rich Casanova. In fact Benedict's popularity abroad is curiously illustrated in the extinct letters of the distinguished French jurist, President de Brosses, who was familiar with him. De Brosses says that while the Pope was regular in behavior—which is said not to be arduous at the age of 65 to 75—he was "indecent in speech." As a matter of fact Benedict, just before his "elevation," uses a particularly gross expletive in a letter to his friend Cardinal Tencin. In another letter he tells Tencin with joy that he has bought a nude marble Venus and finds that the Prince and Princess of Wurttemberg have scratched their names with a diamond on the lady's bottom. He used to tell de Brosses "very good stories about loose women or about the Roman Court," and in return he loved to hear stories about Cardinal Dubois and the French court, which was then in an incredible state of debauch.

All this would be well known to English Masons—Horace Walpole was friendly with Benedict—and they would not hold it against him when, for some obscure reason, he was compelled to renew the condemnation of the fraternity. I fancy the cardinals, disliking his repute for liberality, forced him. But he did little more than reproduce the Constitution of Clement XII; adding—which must have amused many—a vague charge of vice and perversity. He must have been thinking of the secret assemblies of the old Knights Templars.

Different were the condemnations of Masonry by the popes of the 19th century. The first was Pius VII in 1821. This was the Pope whom Napoleon had "handled like a lackey," the "martyr" (in Catholic literature) who signed away the temporal power under pressure of threats. In 1821 Napoleon was in

St. Helena and Masonry was trampled in the mud and blood in every Catholic country. So the brave Pius, now supported by the million bayonets of Russia, Prussia, Austria, and France, executed a sort of war-dance on the remains of Masonry in those countries. He started the romantic version of the fraternity which persisted and grew in Catholic circles until the present century. It had "terrible oaths of secrecy." It sought, like the Carbonari, to destroy Christianity. The Carbonari were originally Catholics who tried to drive the French out of Italy and in 1721 were still mostly Catholics who opposed the temporal power of the popes. In any case nine-tenths of the Masons of the world worshipped the Grand Architect and were good Christians. Worse still "the moral principles in their doctrines"—which Masons hold to be "sublime"—were "horrible" (chiefly, of course, the Brotherhood of Man and mutual help). Their meetings were "horribly sacrilegious" and they "most impudently encouraged debauch and pleasure." The Inquisition, now gloriously restored, must smell out what is left of them in Italy, Malta, Spain and France; and it did, with the usual savage consequences.

This unpardonable libel of the fraternity was not merely repeated by every pope of the 19th century but received its greatest and most stupid expansion in the declarations of the only one of them to whom the world at large gave a respectful hearing, Leo XIII. But there is another aspect of these condemnations which Masonic writers, especially in America, do not know on account of the general suppression, since Catholics became a voting power, of the sordid facts of European history from 1816 to about 1870.

The Vatican and papal Rome, now supported by the Holy Alliance of the Northern Powers as an ally in the destruction of revolution, fell back at once into their old lazy sensuality, administrative corruption, and supine indifference to the welfare of the people.

The three popes who followed Pius VII were despised throughout Europe. Two Cardinal Secretaries of State, Consalvi and Albani, really ruled the Catholic world from 1816 to 1830. The only moral delicacy recorded about them is that both cardinals refused to become priests as they felt more comfortable in their amorous adventures without ordination. Albani was Secretary of State for Leo XII and Pius VIII, and he issued the usual type of blundering and vitriolic condemnation of the Masons for each, though their combined pontifications lasted only seven years. He was one of the many scandalous figures in that dark phase of papal corruption.

Leo XII who lasted five or six years, was a converted sinner of a familiar Roman type. He had several children and while his conduct as Pope was spotless—he was 63 years old and an invalid when he was elected—his chief recreation was shooting birds in the Vatican Garden. His pious truculence—he was brutal to the Jews and to the rebels in the Papal States—made him, says L. von Ranke, "hated by all, princes and beggars"; and the Prussian Ambassador says that the news of his death was hailed by the Romans "with indecent joy." He issued the fourth condemnation of those "torch-bearers of rebellion," the Masons and the Carbonari. His successor, Pius VIII, was a paralytic old man who had to be wheeled, slobbering, about the Vatican Gardens in a bath-chair. "He loved; he wept, he died," was the Roman epitaph. Albani put into his mouth another of these gorgeous surveys of the contemporary world seen through the dead eyes of Thomas Aquinas, and announcements that the Masons were the chief cause of its "cruel calamities."

Three years later the new Pope, Gregory XVI, took up the noble crusade in his Encyclical Mirari. It was another eagle-like survey of the state of the world. "We see," he said, "the triumph of unrestrained wickedness, of a shameless science, of unbridled license. Even

the colleges resound horribly with new and monstrous opinions." Secret societies, especially the Freemasons, are largely responsible for this.

Now not only were there few Masons left in the world except those in America and England, who insisted on the worship of the Grand Architect and the highest principles of morality and were boisterously loyal to their governments, but the most offensive clauses of these papal Constitutions and encyclicals applied more particularly to Papal Italy itself than to any other part of Europe.

Gregory was a man of peculiar and doubtful character. He loved candy and a particularly heady wine, was keen on reading salacious French novels, learning all the spicy gossip of Rome—and it was spicy in those days—and was said by his critics to have as his mistress the wife of his vulgar low-born valet Maroni. However that may have been, the more important point is that the Papal States were even then—in fact, from 1820 to 1860—in so foul a condition (morally, socially, culturally and politically) that the five leading Powers of Europe united to send (in 1831) a letter, which was published, warning the Pope that his dominions were below the level of civilization and a breeding-ground of seditious ideas. Rome itself was warned by a famous French preacher, Lamennais, as "the foulest sewer that was ever opened up to the eye of man." I must refer for details to other works of mine, but even the Cambridge Modern History (vol. X) in which the article on the Papacy is by the Catholic historian Lady Blennerhassett (who approvingly quotes Lamennais) is fully candid. During the century and a half when six popes slandered and cursed the world and the Masons this was the state of their own dominion.

When Gregory died, in 1846, Europe was steadily rising to the level of the great revolutionary year 1848. Continental Masons were certainly now busy plotting

the destruction of such infamies as the Papal and the Neopolitan rule in Italy. In fact Liberalism seemed to have invaded even the clerical world here and there, and the new Pope, Pius IX, was publicly hailed as a Liberal.

Twenty years of savage repression had failed to silence the Italian people. The Church has raised this Pius IX to the rank of Venerable (or half-saint) but in sound history he is an equivocal character. His temperate British biographer, T. A. Trollope, says that in his youth he was "the biggest liar in the school," and his Italian contemporary critics said that he was a pansy in his youth. Larousse, editor of the famous French encyclopedia dictionary, said in earlier editions of that work that Pius, the most vitriolic critic of the Masons before Leo XIII, had himself been a Mason; and at one time the French put into circulation a portrait of him in full Masonic regalia. You can imagine the rage of the godly. The French Masons, they said, had cut off the head of a portrait of a Mason and substituted for it the head of the saintly Pope. But Dudley Wright gives in his "Roman Catholicism and Freemasonry" the official proof that the charge is true. Pius was admitted to the Eterna Catena lodge at Palermo in 1839, when he was already a 46-year-old priest; and other documents show that as a Papal emissary in South America he was received in the lodges at Monte Video.

Cardinal Albani had long passed away, and Pius had chosen Cardinal Antonelli as his Secretary of State; and of this man it is enough to say that he was born the son of a poor peasant, led a life of luxury and license, and at his death left \$20,000,000 and a bastard daughter, who bore the Papal decoration of Countess Lambertini, fighting for it in the courts. Pius had not even the excuse of the revolutions of 1848 for his attack on the Freemasons, for it was launched on the world in 1846.

After 1848, when the Romans sent him flying disguised as a

woman to Naples, he cast aside all pretence of Liberalism and repeatedly libelled the Masons in the familiar style. I say libelled because all these attacks include a charge of conspiring against moral principles as well as against all civil and ecclesiastical authority and religion. Most of us will be aware that Masons are in private life as healthily appreciative of wine, women and song as Catholics or ourselves are. But their code is as insistent on conventional morality as any other, and it entirely lacks the casuistry and dishonesty of the Catholic code. As to their secret meetings being the kind of merry performances in which the devil may be presumed to be interested, it is only a Catholic priest who could make so ludicrous and dishonorable a charge.

Yet this deepest depth of calumny and fatuity was reserved for, as the more sober Catholics would tell you, the greatest Pope since the genial Benedict XIV—Leo XIII. Against Leo's personal character I never heard any reproach. He was, it is true, 68 years old when he was consecrated Pope, since the cardinals, as usual, wanted another vacancy as soon as possible, but the nearest approach to frivolity I ever heard about his earlier clerical career was that, when he had been Papal Nuncio at Brussels and a malicious Liberal noble had offered him his open snuff-box with a nude lady painted on the inside of the lid, Leo had taken a pinch and asked, smilingly: "Is this Madame la Marquise?" I fancy, however, that he knew well that Cardinal Vannutelli, one of the most important in his Sacred College and in the opinion of many destined to be his successor as Holy Father, had a mistress and children living openly within a mile of the Vatican. An American Consul once pointed out the house to me.

Let us say for Leo, who became Pope in 1878, that he had much more reason than his predecessors to attack the Masons. After their temporary return to the Church (1870-5), from fear of the Com-

munards, the French bourgeois Masons were again in full cry against Rome. The Italian Masons now united and enthusiastic from Naples to Milan in the new Kingdom of Italy (1870), were becoming formidable. Spain had a more liberal regime, and the Masons made great progress. In Germany they rallied to the support of Bismarck and his anti-Catholic program. The world had become far brighter for man, and proportionately darker for the Church, since the days of Gregory XVI. A new sun was rising—evolutionary science—and the pale moon of theology was sinking.

But, while the press receives all papal pronouncements on bended knees, no pope ever yet accurately described the realities of life. The stereotyped papal lamentations cannot be used unless the facts are first grossly distorted. From a sound sociological angle the eighth decade of the last century saw the swiftest advance from the lingering medieval injustices and illusions toward modern civilization. But Leo XIII, still in the prime of his life, affected to see in it the omens of the end of civilization.

His encyclical (1884) opened with a contrast of the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the Devil. He went back 2,400 years, to the hills of ancient Persia, for his answer to modern science, democracy, and freedom. Every progressive movement in the world came from the devil, who had organized all the forces of evil for a grand attack; and the devil's shock-troops were the Freemasons. They had made "incredible progress" and they were "blind slaves" to unknown authorities who were in league with Satan. They rejected God and immortality, attacked marriage and the family, were corrupting morals everywhere. He writes these things in a city which only half a century earlier had been described by a devout priest as "the foulest sewer ever opened up to the eye of man" and was now enormously improved by the Italian authorities. He tells states that they are in danger of perishing, yet he knew well that secular statesmen, largely Masons,

had converted the Papal States from "the shame of Europe", as the British ambassador publicly said, to comparative respectability on the very lines which he describes as leading to hell.

In the last chapter, and more fully in my "History of Satanism," I described the weird and fantastic consequences of this folly. In a few years the Pope was giving solemn audience and papal decorations to the most blatant liars and im-

posters in French literature. This "most profound and most enlightened of modern Popes" was accepting fables about devils as smoothly as Martin Luther and Thomas Aquinas had done. He saw his Church melt away and, except when the Portuguese Revolution moved the peasant-Pope Pius X to repeat the stupid old rhetoric in 1911, his successors have had little to say about the fraternity.

## 5. FREEMASONRY IN AMERICA

It would be ludicrous to suggest that a Papal crusade of this kind defeated atheistic Masonry. In the Latin countries it continued to flourish for a quarter of a century after Leo XIII had informed a dazed world that devils attended the lodges and gave the Masons their plans for destroying religion and civilization. In France it had won all its aims by 1914, and as the secular Republic was firmly established, the statesmen, who were to a great extent Masons, felt that they could safely flirt with the Vatican between the two World Wars.

In Italy Masonry remained powerful until the spread of Socialism drove the middle class under the Fascist banner, and Mussolini sold the Masons out to the Papacy when he needed an alliance with it.

In Spain the Masons were curbed under the dictatorship of de Rivera, then worked with the Socialists to get rid of him and found a Republic, finally deserted the socialists and rallied to the support of Franco in alliance with their hereditary enemies, the priests. The same occurred in Portugal and, as I explained, in South America.

This was the end of what I have called Progressive Freemasonry, which was, in fact, mainly atheistic. It was in a sense a victory for the Church, which had always assured the privileged classes that it was their most powerful supporter. During the same period what I have called Acquiescent Freemasonry made more rapid progress than ever. At the beginning of the 19th century there were far less than a million Masons in America. By 1936, when the continental European Masonry was either powerless or became Acquiescent everywhere, there were in America 3,300,000, besides another million

in "Side Orders" and probably a further million in irregular (colored folk, etc.) societies. Some peculiarity of American life or character seems to favor the growth of these bodies with what you might call an air of synthetic mysticism. There are, as I said, at least 20,000,000 adult Americans enrolled in them, and their very names and their professions of secrecy, which one would at first glance think entirely at variance with the realism of the American character, make them prosper more in the United States than in any other country. There are more than half a million Nobles of the Mystic Shrine and two million members of the Order of the Eastern Star: which is described as a "secret sisterhood" in which female relatives of Masons can partly enjoy the melodramatic oaths and ceremonies of the men.

I have not said anything up to the present about this question of woman and masonry, which seems to fascinate many. Dudley Wright has a work on the subject and it is authoritative. He surprises me only when he says that there is "presumptive evidence" that women were admitted to the Order of the Knights Templars of the Middle Ages. That order was crushed and its leader burned alive mainly on the ground that it was comprehensively addicted to sodomy and, as I show elsewhere, French jurists have generally held that the trial of them was fair and the verdict justified. Into Masonry proper, Craft Masonry, only three or four bold bad women have ever penetrated "whether by accident or design"—or, he might have added, by the use of their charms. But at all times there have been androgynous (bisexual) bodies which he calls "Adoptive Masonry," like the Amer-

ican Order of the Eastern Star. He reproduces the full liturgy of several of these bodies and says that in the year in which he wrote there were "three Grand Lodges of Androgynous Freemasons." Mrs. Annie Besant was at one time Deputy-Master of Co-Masonry for Great Britain and Ireland. These bodies, sometimes controlled by the Grand Lodges and always in close relations with them, seem to have escaped the eagle eye of the Vatican. What groans they would have drawn from the pontifical breast!

It is claimed that there were many Masonic centers in the American colonies before the English Grand Lodge gave charters for regular lodges in 1730 and 1733. Doubtless British or Scottish Masons from the early societies were amongst the pioneers, and we have to imagine one of these settling in a district and recommending to his bored neighbors the kind of convivial meeting to which he had been accustomed. There seems to have been no organization but the reader who wants to learn about these early traces of the fraternity or settle the mixed question whether the establishment of the lodge in Burlington by Daniel Cox was really prior to the activity of Henry Price of Boston must consult Melvin Johnson's exhaustive "Beginnings of Freemasonry in America" (1924). Nor need I here summarize the story of the craft in America from 1730 to recent times.

Until the War of Independence the lodges were all, or nearly all, chartered by the English Masons, but they repudiated the allegiance at the Declaration of Independence. Since then every variety of Masonic rite has been introduced. It is enough that 14 Presidents—Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Monroe, Jackson, Polk, Fillmore, Buchanan, Johnson, Garfield, Harrison, McKinley, Taft, and Theodore Roosevelt are claimed for the fraternity, and some writers further claim Madison, Taylor, and Pierce. A large number of other distinguished men—Lafayette,

Franklin, Paine, Burr, Sherman, Hamilton, Fulton, etc.—are on the lists.

There is perhaps some fallacy in naming distinguished men who are known to have joined a lodge at one time or other when we do not know their mature opinion of the fraternity. It is often stressed that such famous German scholars and writers as Goethe, Lessing, and Herder joined the fraternity in the 18th century, when its secret meetings appealed particularly to young rebels against the narrow traditions and clerical despotism of the older Germany, but it seems that they quit it in disgust and sometimes ridiculed its pretensions. On the other hand men of high character and considerable culture have not only persisted in it but expressed their appreciation of it in quite remarkable language, as if it really possessed some secret wisdom or force that could be of great value to the world. One must, of course, make some allowance for the American love of florid oratory and moving imagery on ceremonial occasions. There are hundreds of gems like the following in the records:

"Masonry is the shrine of grave thoughts and beautiful sentiments, the seminary for the improvement of the moral and the mental standard of its members."

What surprises the outsider most of all is that the most serious or responsible members of the fraternity speak constantly of its "sublime morality" and find this symbolically expressed in the signs, regalia, and rites which seem foolish to the outsider. It is these, probably, which move even recent Masonic writers to say that the craft must be of great antiquity and make them study the history, especially the mythical history, of the past in search of a founder.

Few non-Masons who give adequate thought to the subject will doubt today that the fraternity definitely began in the Gild of builders in the Middle Ages and that the symbols are not expres-

sions of truths but that these propositions have been read into them. There is, in fact, some inconsistency in the attitude of those who profess to believe that the fraternity has some profound and valuable truths of great value to the race, yet these have to be veiled by a strict secrecy from the community. The secrecy, in so far as it exists—in some of the illustrated Masonic works there are colored plates of the theatrical-looking higher officers in their most solemn rites and free quotations of the ritual—seems now to be one of the super official attractions of the lodge.

Most of us have had sufficient personal acquaintance with Masons to feel justified in saying that to the immense majority of them Freemasonry is neither a religion nor a set of moral truths. During one of my long ocean voyages I became friendly with the higher officers of the boat, who were all Masons. The only one who insisted on its high value as a pure religion was the chief engineer who often rebuked my Atheism. I have heard men swear in many languages but I never met one who was so fluent in profane language as he was; and the chief officer, an oldish man who had sailed the Seven Seas, said the same about him. I do not regard swearing as anything more than a picturesque variation of speech, but. . . . At all events, I have found Masons always too human to suppose that they were enshrining some beautiful religious truth or sublime morality in their breasts. It is often, if not generally, said by outsiders that the chief attraction of the fraternity is, like that of the Knights of Columbus, economic: it improves your business prospects to belong to it. **My Masonic friend Dudley Wright always denied this, yet he never spoke of Masonry as a lofty religion or ethic.** and it seems that the majority of its members do not seriously regard it in that light. To them it seems to be a genial and real fraternity for convivial and mutual aid purposes with a

piquant dash of theatricality in its forms.

The 19th century schism of Acquiescent and Progressive Masonry is, like so much in human affairs, an expression of a sharp contrast of environments as far as politics is concerned. American Masons of the last century largely recognized this. It was the Atheism of the Grand Orient that they resented, and in this they were not to be admired. By the middle of the 19th century the bulk of French middle-class men were skeptics, as is easily gathered from the skepticism of nine-tenths of their best and most widely read writers, and, however many Catholics there still were amongst them, these were rigorously barred from entering the fraternity by a stern threat of excommunication from which the Pope alone could free them. Protestants were not one in 50 of the population of France. In point of fact, therefore, virtually all French Masons after 1870 at least were Atheists and it was preposterous to expect them to do solemn homage to the Grand Architect because the British reorganizers of the fraternity had, in 1717, during the Deistic phase of the evolution of thought, given that form to the Constitution.

And it was just these atheistic Masons of France, Italy, Spain, and Spanish America who proved that there was some sincere reality in the doctrine of the Brotherhood of Man. Mutual assistance in business or in financial difficulties is admirable but it is not "sublime morality." All that was best in America—the America that set up a statue of Liberty to greet refugees from tyranny—followed the struggle against the royalist-papal despotism in Europe with deep sympathy. It was a fight for the Brotherhood of Man, just as the Civil War in America had been. Albert Pike, who is generally regarded as one of the greatest of American Masons, called the Papacy "the torturer," "the curse of humanity," and "the most shameless imposture." With an eye on the struggles in Europe, he said:

"With tongue and pen, with all our open and secret influence, with the purse and, if need be, with the sword, we will advance the cause of human progress and labor to enfranchise human thought."

That is precisely what the disowned atheistic Masons were doing from Italy to Peru. It would astonish this generation of American Ma-

sons if they applied a tithe of their ample funds to the compilation of a sort of Masonic martyrology: a list of the Masons of France, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Latin America who laid down their lives or perished in infamous jails or penal colonies in the cause of freedom and democracy in the course of the 19th century.